









W. GLÖTZLE

ENGLAND-VI

GRAVURE F. HANFSTAENGL



### SAINT GEORGE OF ENGLAND

(The Legendary Saint of England Conquers the Dragon)

*From the painting by W. Glötzle, the recent German artist*

**S**AINTE GEORGE, the patron saint of England, was not an Englishman at all. He lived in Cappadocia in Asia during Roman days, and was a celebrated Christian martyr; he is, in fact, the patron saint of the East as well as of England. He had been a soldier fighting in Palestine; so when the European Crusaders of the middle ages fought in Palestine, they appealed to Saint George for aid. Richard the Lion-hearted, England's chief crusading king, adopted George as his special guide and patron, and so brought the fame of this saint to England. By royal order, the feast of Saint George (April 23) was first kept as a national holiday throughout England in 1222; and he has since been regarded as the special model and protector of the nation.

The legend of Saint George is that he was journeying as a Roman knight to join his legion when he came to a city which was ravaged by a dragon. Every day the people sent out two of their fairest children to the dragon; for if its appetite was not thus daintily sated it devoured crowds of the citizens. At length the king's daughter was to be sacrificed, when George appeared and vowed that he would fight the dragon in Christ's name. He did so, pinned the beast to the earth with his lance, and so subdued it that he was able to bind it with the girdle of the princess, who led it about like a dog. At this sight, all the people of the city were converted to Christianity.





## Saint George of England

(The Legend of Saint George, the Patron of England)

**S**aint George, the patron saint of England, was born in Cappadocia at Bithynia. He lived in the third century, and was a devoted Christian. He was a knight of the Emperor Diocletian, and was sent to the island of Rhodes to guard the temple of the goddess Minerva. He was a brave and noble knight, and was loved by all the people of the island. He was a devoted Christian, and was a knight of the Emperor Diocletian. He was a brave and noble knight, and was loved by all the people of the island. He was a devoted Christian, and was a knight of the Emperor Diocletian. He was a brave and noble knight, and was loved by all the people of the island.

The legend of Saint George is that he was journeying as a Roman knight to join his legion when he came to a city which was ravaged by a dragon. Every day the people sent out two of their finest soldiers to the dragon; for if its appetite was not thus daily satisfied it destroyed crowds of the citizens. At length the king's daughter was to be sacrificed when George appeared and vowed that he would fight the dragon in his stead. He did not pin the least to the earth with his lance, and subdued it; but he was able to lead it with the girl of the prince, who led it about like a dog. At this sight all the people of the city were converted to Christianity.







Volume Sixth









## GREAT BRITAIN

(The Chief Districts, Cities and Battlefields of English History)

*Prepared especially for this series by Austin Smith*

**S**CIENTISTS tell us that the mixing of many races makes the ablest race, that from the mingling of many bloods arises a complexity of emotions that produces mental alertness and so urges intellectual progress. The history of England is largely a history of such an admixture of various peoples, finally welded into a single race which has now for over five centuries been playing a conspicuously successful part in the world's work.

A reference to the map of England will show the chief lands which have surrounded it and which have sent their people to take part in its upbuilding. The basic stock of the English is Teutonic, formed by the tribes of Saxons and of Angles or English who sailed across the North Sea from Germany and took possession of the southeastern coast, forming their little kingdoms of Kent, Essex and Sussex, and thence spreading across the island. Most important of the commingling stocks were the ancient Britons or Celts, whom the Teutons found in possession and drove slowly back into the rugged mountain lands of Scotland and Wales. Then France supplied the Normans, few in number but powerful of mind and spirit, to conquer and mingle with the rest. And always there has been a flow of Danes, Irishmen and Norsemen crossing seas from east and west and adding their racial characteristics to the whole.











# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL., U.S.A.

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## THE BURIAL OF CADWALLON

(The Champion Who Had Led the Britons Against Cæsar is Mourned as a Demigod)

*From a water color painted in 1891 by William W. Collins*

THOSE earliest searchers of the world, the Phœnician and Greek tradesmen, knew of the British Isles. They found rich tin mines there and so called the group the "Tin Isles." But we get from those ancient traders little knowledge of the people of Britain. The first man of thoughtful eye and ready pen to preserve for us any description of these ancient Britons, was that universal genius Julius Cæsar. After conquering Gaul, Cæsar led his legions across the English Channel. He tells us how eager the Britons were to fight him. They ran along the shore brandishing their spears and challenging him to land. They even cast aside the rough skins in which they were clad, and rushed into the water to the attack, their naked bodies stained with barbaric splendor of blue paint.

The chief leader to oppose Cæsar was Cadwallon, king of the region around London. Cadwallon was defeated and his hidden city was hunted out and burned; but he kept up his resistance, and all the Britons rallied round him. Cæsar finally gave up the idea of subduing the land, as the people were too savage and the land too poor to pay the cost of conquest. When the Romans left, Cadwallon was hailed as king over the land. His people regarded him almost as a god, and his death soon afterward was mourned as a great calamity. Cadwallon thus stands as England's earliest national hero.











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## CARACTACUS IN CHAINS

(The Last Independent Chief of the Britons Paraded as a Prisoner in Rome)

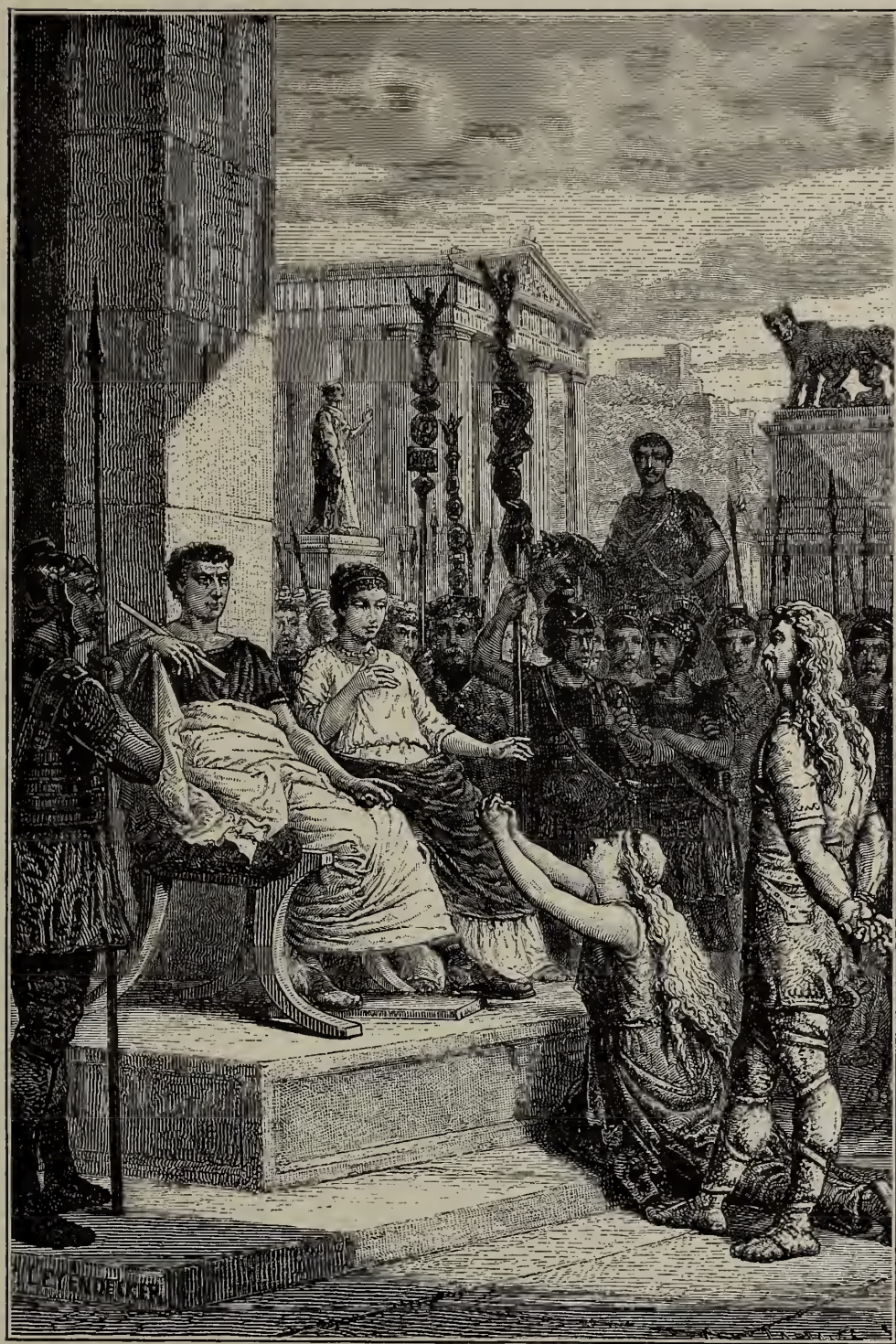
*From the historical series of drawings by Paul Leyendecker*

**A**LMOST a century after Cadwallon, the Roman emperor Claudius resolved to add Britain to Rome's domains. So he sent his legions, and for nine years these fought the desperate Britons, who had now for leader a sturdy chieftain known as Caractacus. All Britain was subjugated at last. Caractacus was made prisoner and carried off to Rome, where he and his wife were marched in triumphal procession before the Emperor.

The sturdy British leader faced the luxurious Roman lord with scorn, refusing to bow to him or to sue for liberty. Instead he expressed contempt for these Romans who, possessing so much of their own wealth, could still covet the hovels of the poor Britons.

The wife of Caractacus pleaded for her defiant husband and Claudius set him free. Great Britain, however, became a Roman province and so remained for nearly four hundred years. Many wealthy Romans, attracted by the equable climate, purchased lands and built splendid villas in southern England. Roman roads traversed the island from end to end, and a huge Roman wall was built from sea to sea to shut out the tribes of the farther north. These wildest of the ancient inhabitants, the Scots and Picts as they were called, were never conquered. Thus they had no share in the benefits of Roman culture and grew to be wholly different from the gradually civilizing Britons in the south.











CHRISTIANITY ENTERS



## CHRISTIANITY ENTERS BRITAIN

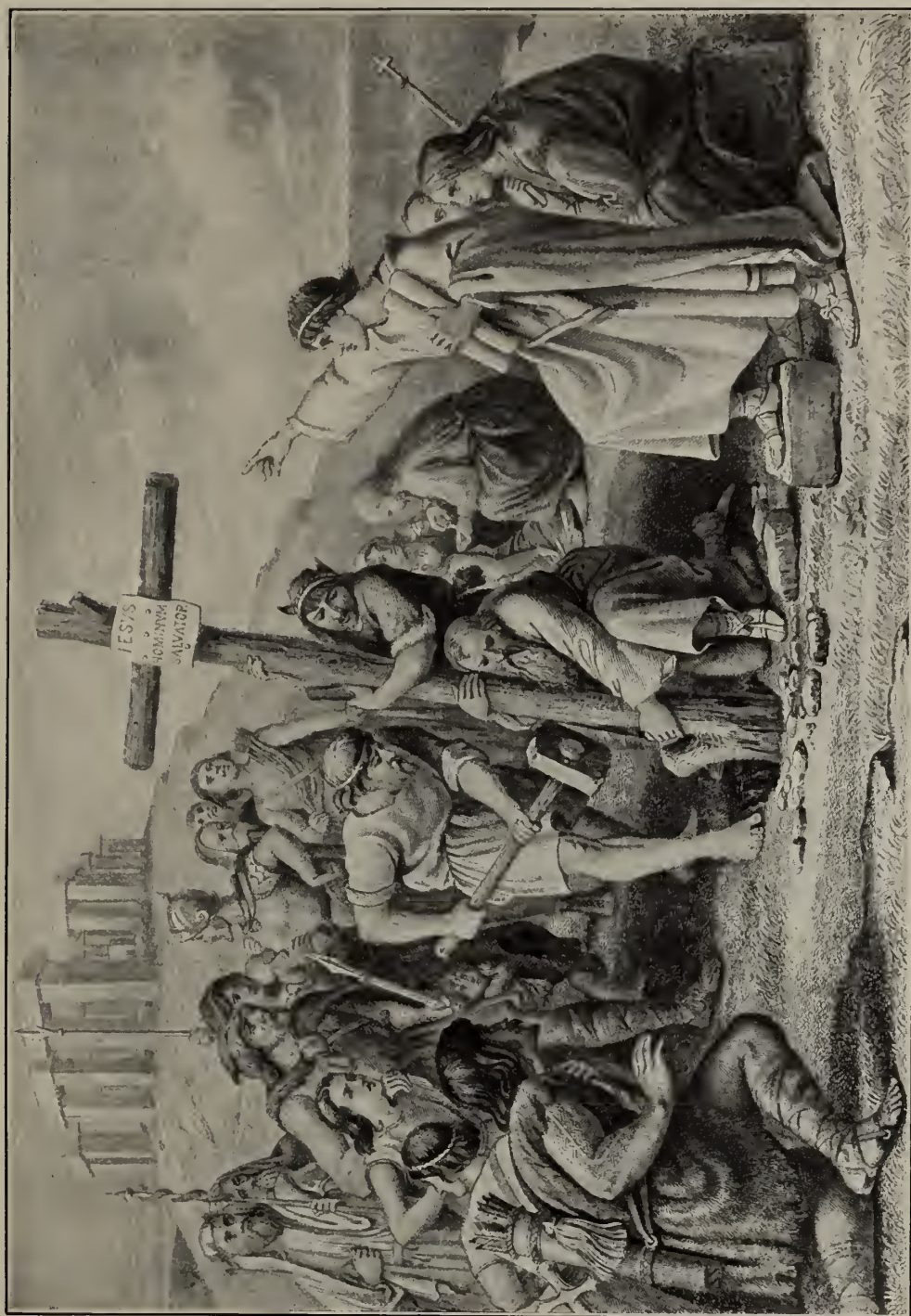
(The Christian Missionaries Erect Their First Church at Glastonbury)

*From a painting in the South Kensington Museum by C. W. Cope, R.A.*

THE religion of the early Britons had been, like that of their cousins, the Gauls of France, that strange faith known as Druidism, which combined a belief in a future life with the performance of the most cruel and barbaric acts of worship in this. Such was the influence of the Druids or priests of the old faith upon the people, that the Romans saw they could only really hold the nation in subjection by destroying the Druids. So these were attacked upon their sacred island of Anglesey in the Irish Sea, and were all slain. The worship of the Roman gods, Jupiter and all the others, was then formally established in Britain. But as nobody, not even the Romans themselves, had very much faith in these obsolete idols, the destruction of Druidism really left the way open for the introduction of the world's new faith, Christianity.

This was probably brought into Britain by the Roman soldiers, and was readily adopted by the Britons, who found it close akin to their former faith. The first Christian Church is said to have been erected in Glastonbury, where according to legend Joseph of Arimathea, the rich convert who had aided Christ upon the cross, brought some of the followers of the Messiah. Whether we accept Joseph or another as the first Christian in Britain, the land soon became thoroughly Christianized. When the Roman Emperor Constantine set forth to Christianize the world, he was a general in Britain and marched forth from there with a Christian army.

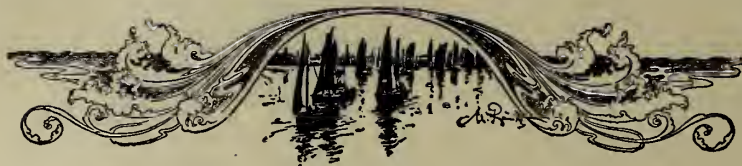












## COMING OF THE TEUTONS

(Hengst, the Jutish Chief, Accepted as Leader of the Teutonic Invaders)

*From a painting by the British artist, Allan Stewart*

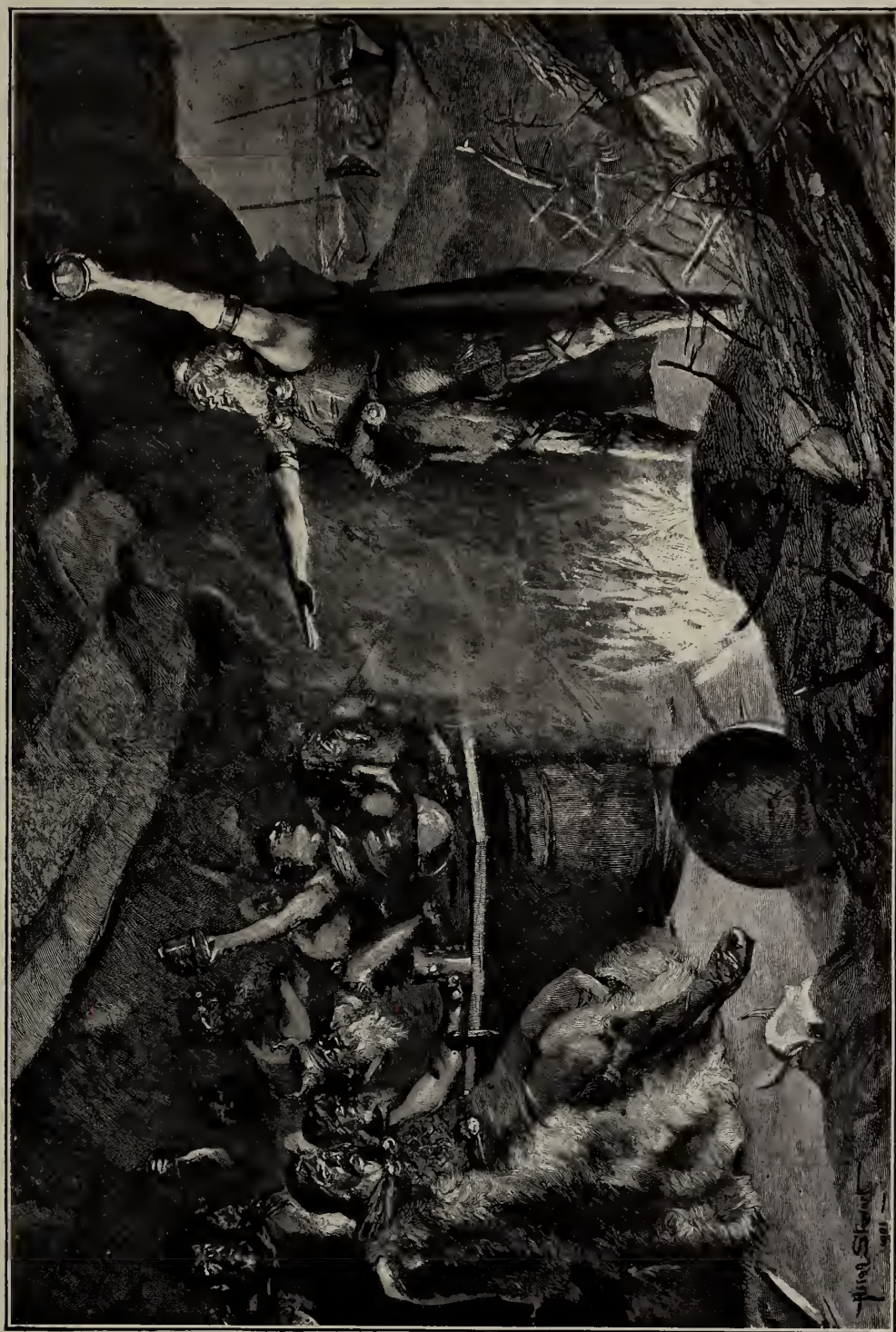
THESE Christianized, Romanized Britons were almost swept away by another race of invaders. The Germanic tribes, as you will remember, trampled the Roman world to pieces during the fifth century. The Roman troops in Britain abandoned that country to lend their aid to the defense of Rome. The Britons, thus left to themselves after four centuries of peaceful dependence upon Rome, had almost forgotten how to fight. The barbarian tribes who inhabited the neighboring lands swarmed upon them from all sides.

In despair, the British king Vortigern sought the aid of two Germanic sea-rovers, Hengst and Horsa. These two sturdy fighters, after aiding Vortigern a while, determined to seize for themselves this fair and feeble land. So they sent over for more shiploads of their Germanic friends, Jutes, Saxons and Angles. As long as possible they retained the pretext of being allies of Vortigern, being aided by his admiration for a fair Jutish maiden, probably the daughter of Hengst. Horsa was slain in battle and then Hengst was named sole leader. He entrapped the Britons at a feast, slew all their chiefs and so established himself as king over the southeastern province of England, the kingdom of Kent.

During a century and a half these Teutonic invaders kept snatching more and more of Britain, slaying or driving back the Britons until the latter held only the mountain lands of Wales and the far north.











## SAINT AUGUSTINE

Translated from the Latin by the Rev. John J. O'Connell, S.J., and published by the Catholic Book Concern, New York, 1864.

THESE are the words of the great saint, who has been called the Father of the Church. He was born in the city of Hippo, in the province of Africa, in the year of our Lord 354. He was a man of great learning and piety, and was one of the most distinguished of the Fathers of the Church. He was a man of great courage and strength of mind, and was one of the most powerful of the preachers of the Gospel. He was a man of great charity and love for his fellow-men, and was one of the most generous of the benefactors of the Church. He was a man of great wisdom and insight, and was one of the most profound of the thinkers of his age. He was a man of great faith and trust in God, and was one of the most devoted of the followers of Christ. He was a man of great hope and confidence in the future, and was one of the most optimistic of the men of his time. He was a man of great courage and strength of mind, and was one of the most powerful of the preachers of the Gospel. He was a man of great charity and love for his fellow-men, and was one of the most generous of the benefactors of the Church. He was a man of great wisdom and insight, and was one of the most profound of the thinkers of his age. He was a man of great faith and trust in God, and was one of the most devoted of the followers of Christ. He was a man of great hope and confidence in the future, and was one of the most optimistic of the men of his time.







## SAINT AUGUSTINE

(Augustine Preaches Christianity to King Ethelbert of Kent)

*From the series by the French artist, Paul Leyendecker*

THE invading tribes who thus Germanized ancient Britain did not at once form a single kingdom. They were divided into several little states, and as an Anglian chief was the first to extend his rule over most of his neighbors, the entire island came to be called Angle-land or England. Yet as the Saxons were the most prominent single tribe, occupying several of the little kingdoms, the invading people as a whole were known as Saxons or Anglo-Saxons.

These tribes were pagans when they entered England, and they scorned to accept Christianity from the Britons they had conquered; but after a time the world-pervading faith reached them from another source. This occurred toward the close of the sixth century, when Gregory the Great was Pope at Rome. Gregory sent the monk Augustine with a number of followers to preach in England. They came by way of France, and so reached first the little kingdom of Kent. Its ruler, Ethelbert, received them kindly, for he had married a queen from France, who was herself a Christian. At her persuasion Ethelbert even consented to listen to Augustine, and he was so impressed by the monk's teaching that he not only accepted the new faith himself, but commanded his people to do the same. Thus Kent became Christian; and its metropolis, Canterbury, became what it still remains to-day, the seat of the chief English archbishopric. From Kent the faith spread to all the English.















## KING ALFRED AND THE DANES

(Alfred at the Lowest Ebb of His Fortune Enters the Danish Camp as a Spy)

*From a painting by the Danish artist, K. Ekwall*

FOR perhaps two hundred years these Anglo-Saxons retained undisputed possession of the land they had seized from the Britons. Then came another set of invaders, the Danes. They began landing in tiny shiploads just as the Saxons had once done, plundering and then escaping. By degrees, as their numbers and boldness increased, the Danes won possession of all the northern half of England. They came now in large fleets, and marched in armies, and were only stayed from completing their conquest of England by the heroism of one man, that most remarkable and memorable of England's benefactors, Alfred the Great.

In the year 870 Alfred, then a youth scarce twenty-one, became king of Wessex or the West-Saxons. Already his little state had been invaded by the Danes, and after fighting them desperately for several years, Alfred found himself reduced to such extremity that he was alone, a fugitive, while the Danish king Guthrum ravaged helpless Wessex from end to end. It was then that Alfred, having gathered a little band of men as homeless and reckless as himself, ventured as a spy into Guthrum's camp. Disguised as a harper he sang to the Danes and learned their plans. Thus prepared, he was able to attack them unawares with his little band, and put them to flight. The tide of fortune turned completely in his favor.















## ALFRED MADE KING OF ENGLAND

(All the Angles and Saxons Hail Him as Their Chief and Make England a Single Kingdom)

*From a painting by R. Caton Woodville, the English artist*

ALFRED defeated the Danes so repeatedly that they made peace with him and withdrew from Wessex. Soon, however, they came marauding again, and Alfred pursued them into the neighboring states and defeated them there also. At length, in 886, came that great day when the chief men from all the little Anglo-Saxon kingdoms gathered and entreated Alfred to lead them all, as being the one man who could make headway against the Danes. Alfred accepted and they swore fealty to him, each in turn handing his sword to Alfred and receiving it back as the king's gift. Then they acclaimed Alfred as "King of the English." He had now behind him a united nation.

With this force Alfred was able to hold southern England secure against the Danes, though they still kept possession of the north. Alfred rebuilt London, which had become a mere heap of ruins; and to defend the city he erected a tower, some fragments of which still remain as part of the celebrated fortress, the "Tower of London." Moreover, the king took advantage of the peace he had established, to restore the civilization which the Danes had practically destroyed. Our oldest English manuscripts are those of King Alfred's time. All of England's literature and art, its science and its culture, date their beginning from this remarkable man. With him began that upward march of a thousand years which has placed Great Britain where she stands to-day.















## EDWARD TAKES UP HIS FATHER'S WORK

(Alfred's Son is Offered the Kingship and Proclaims War on the Danes)

*From the series by R. Caton Woodville*

**A**LFRED THE GREAT died in the year 901, worn out with the labors of his kingdom. Fortunately, he left behind him an able son, Edward the Elder as he is called in the roll of Saxon kings. Edward was recognized by all the English as the man best fitted to carry on his father's work, so they raised him on their shields with shouts of acclaim. Alfred had driven the Danes into northern England; Edward swore that he would conquer them altogether and summoned his eager warriors to follow him at once to the attack.

Edward so defeated and harried the Danes that they offered to become his subjects, and paid him tribute. Thus Edward was really king of all England, whereas Alfred had held sway over only its southern half. Edward ruled with wisdom and power for over a quarter of a century, and then was succeeded by a son. This new king defeated both the Irish and the Scotch in a decisive battle and established his sway over them. Thus step by step the Saxons extended their power, until the next king, called Edward the Magnificent, ruled over a really prosperous, peaceful and fairly civilized people, widely different from the exhausted, ignorant and despairing folk whom Alfred had found on the point of being enslaved by the Danes.













## THE POWER OF THE CHURCH

(Archbishop Dunstan Defies the Queen and Makes Edward the Martyr King)

*From the series by R. Caton Woodville*

THREE rather feeble sovereigns succeeded one another after the death of Edward the Magnificent. The royal race of Alfred seemed losing its vigor. Still the weakness of these kings did not prove disastrous to England, because during all three of their reigns, for a period of nearly forty years, the country was really ruled by the great churchly statesman, Dunstan. Next to Alfred, Dunstan was the greatest man of all Saxon England. He kept the land powerful and at peace. He was also a scientist, so clever that the people declared he was more than a match for the devil himself. They told a story that once the fiend had come into Saint Dunstan's cell while the monk was experimenting and had offered to help him with black magic; but the saint caught the devil by the nose with a pair of pincers and did not let him go until the unhappy fiend had aided in the scientific work for nothing.

Yet even Dunstan was outwitted by a woman. The second of the kings for whom he ruled left two young sons. Their mother Elfrida wanted the younger to have the throne. But Dunstan knew that in that case Elfrida would be the real ruler, so he hastily gathered the chief men of the land and crowned the older boy, Edward. Elfrida watched the crowning, powerless; but soon after she managed to have Edward slain, and her own favorite was crowned. Dunstan, old and powerless, retired to a monastery, and the land was swept into a torrent of disaster.













## KING CANUTE AND THE WAVES

(Canute, Lauded by His Courtiers as King of the Ocean, Teaches Them Their Folly.)

*From a drawing by the French artist, C. Laplante*

**E**LFRIDA and her unworthy son did nothing to strengthen the warlike power of the country. Sea-robbers from Denmark were once more harrying the coast. The queen tried to buy off the invaders, thus grinding England beneath taxation and tempting the Danes to return again and again in ever increasing numbers. At length Sweyn, King of Denmark, defeated an English king and called himself King of England. He died shortly after, and his son Canute took up the struggle and not only won the title but actually ruled over England for nearly twenty years (1017-1035). By this time so many Danes were permanently settled in northern England, that Danes and Saxons were almost like one people and the struggles of Sweyn and Canute against their Saxon rivals are to be regarded as a strife between two dynasties as to which should reign, not as the conquest of one race by the other.

Canute made a wise, strong king. Of him is told the well-known story of his rebuke to his flattering courtiers. Since he was king of both Denmark and England and much of Norway and Sweden as well, his courtiers assured him he was the greatest lord in the world, so powerful that even the ocean obeyed him. So Canute bade them place his chair of state upon the beach, and forbade the rising tide to approach him. When its waves had drenched both him and his courtiers, he bade them thereafter keep their worship for Heaven's King, since He alone was all-powerful.













THE COMING OF THE SAXONS

# THE STORY OF THE GREATEST NATIONS

## MODERN NATIONS—ENGLAND

### Chapter CI

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLAND

[*Authorities*: Green, "History of the English People"; Guizot, "Popular History of England"; Kemble, "The Saxons in England"; MacFayden, "Alfred, the West-Saxon"; Palgrave, "Rise of the English Commonwealth," "History of Normandy and England"; Bagehot, "The English Constitution"; Freeman, "History of England"; Hume, "History of England"; Knight, "Popular History of England"; Lingard, "History of England"; Von Ranke, "History of England"; Froude, "History of England," "The English in Ireland"; Gardiner, "History of England from James I."; Carlyle, "Oliver Cromwell"; Macaulay, "History of England from James II."; Lecky, "England in the Eighteenth Century"; Mill, "History of British India"; MacMullen, "History of Canada"; Martineau, "History of England during the Peace"; McCarthy, "History of Our Own Times."]



AMERICANS should not read the story of England as they would that of a foreign country. Those of us who have looked into the past, approach this tale with quickened heart-beats and a livelier interest.

Our land was originally settled by Englishmen; and, much as immigration has since altered our race, the foundation remains. It is not merely our language that comes to us from England; she gave us our bodies and our brains, our laws, our hopes, and even our religion.

The grim barons who wrung the "Great Charter" from their unwilling king, the mighty sea-fighters who followed Drake and Raleigh, belong as much to our past as they do to that of any sturdy Briton of to-day. So it is



not as an alien volume, but rather as an earlier chapter of our own more recent tale, that this story of England should be read.

Could we raise the curtain on Great Britain, far back in the twilight of history, we should see, instead of an island, a projecting part of the European continent, for geologists agree that the country was once attached to the mainland. It had a climate of arctic severity, to which of course its animal and vegetable life corresponded. About the only difference between the beasts of the wood and the men was that the latter understood how to walk on two legs.

The civilized nations of the ancient world knew nothing of Britain until the daring Phœnician sailors, coasting Gaul, saw in the distant horizon the white cliffs of a strange land. The Gauls told them that because of the white color of the cliffs they had given the name of "Albion"—meaning white—to the country. The pretty title has lived through all the centuries and is still a favorite one with poets and orators.

The Phœnicians looked farther into the land of the white cliffs and found that it contained numerous rich mines of tin and lead. Tin was highly valued, and the Phœnicians soon opened a brisk trade with the people. One of their captains, Pytheas, sailed entirely around the little group of islands, in the third century B.C., and wrote a brief record of his voyage. The accounts of those remote days, however, are so vague and meagre that little dependence can be placed upon them, and we must come down to the time of the mighty Cæsar for our first definite knowledge of England.

You will remember that while Cæsar was engaged in conquering Gaul, he discovered that his opponents received great help from their kinsmen, who crossed over from Albion to aid them in repelling the Roman invaders. This fact, added to the strange stories which he heard about the people of the islands, led Cæsar, in the year 55 B.C., to sail for Albion—which he, in imitation of the Greeks, called Britain. He took with him two legions, or about twelve thousand men, and that was the first historical invasion of England. The time was late in summer, and the landing-place near the site of the present town of Deal.

The shaggy Britons had watched the approach of the Roman ships, and were in truth more eager for battle than the Romans themselves. The savages had flung off their clothing of skins, so they were literally "stripped for the fight," and many who were on horseback forced their animals far out into the waves, while the riders taunted the invaders, whom they were impatient to reach. Others galloped up and down the beach in their war chariots and filled the air with their defiant cries.

The Romans drawing near were awed by what they saw. They had learned from the Gauls of the frenzied devotion of the Britons to the Druidical faith.

The Romans knew nothing of that gloomy and fearful religion, and at first were afraid to offend the unknown god whom the savages worshipped. They hesitated, and we can fancy that Cæsar himself may have faltered at first, though not for long. When the invaders were close to land and the shrieking horde on shore were waiting for them to come within reach of their war clubs and swords, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion leaped into the sea and shouted as he dashed toward shore:

"Follow me, my fellow-soldiers, unless you will give up your standard to the enemy!"

Thrilled by the heroism of their comrade, the others sprang after him and drove the defenders before them. Discipline always prevails, and, despite their bravery, the Britons were soon scattered in disorder. They learned in the furious struggle that they were no match for these terrible invaders, and on the morrow sent ambassadors to Cæsar begging for peace. The great Roman was always approachable and considerate to the feelings of others. He listened to the suppliants kindly, agreed upon the terms, and a few weeks later sailed away for Rome. In his "Commentaries," Cæsar refers to his first campaign in Britain as a reconnoitring expedition, and expresses his intention of returning there later.

Accordingly, the following year he came back with a more powerful force, and penetrated some distance inland. His most determined opponent, the hero whose name first stands out for our remembrance in British history, is called by the conqueror, Cassivellanus, which is probably a Latinized form of the British name Cadwallon. Cadwallon was the chief or king of a tribe dwelling in the neighborhood of modern London, and his capital stood on the present site of St. Albans. He fought valiantly against the Romans; but some of the neighboring tribes over whom he wielded a vague and probably tyrannous lordship, turned against him.

These rebels, joining the Romans, guided them to Cadwallon's hidden city, which was sacked and burned. Still, however, Cadwallon kept up his resistance, and after several months Cæsar, finding little either of pleasure or profit in the wild, bleak island, abandoned it. Cadwallon was regarded as a national hero by the Britons, and his leadership over the island continued until his death.

Cæsar, on his return to Rome, brought with him some spoils and large numbers of captives as hostages. Yet there was significance in the declaration of Tacitus regarding these expeditions of Cæsar: "He did not conquer Britain; he only showed it to the Romans."

Britain was now left to itself for nearly a hundred years. Then in A.D. 43 the Emperor Claudius led a third invasion into the country. As before,

the islanders made a sturdy resistance, and it was not until nine years had passed that Roman valor and discipline triumphed. Among the captives brought back to Rome was Caractacus, the heroic leader of the Britons. Though in chains, Caractacus held his head unbowed and his spirit unbroken. When he looked upon the splendor and magnificence of Rome, he exclaimed: "Why do you who possess all this, covet the poor hovels of my countrymen?"

Brought in front of Claudius, Caractacus looked him defiantly in the face and refused to kneel and beg for his liberty. The simple majesty and dignity of the prisoner so impressed the Emperor that he set him and his family free.

It has been said that the religion of the ancient Britons was Druidical. This faith was hideous in many of its features and of frightful severity, possessing no trace of the gentleness of Christianity. Druid is from a word meaning an oak. The people venerated this tree and also the mistletoe, which still forms a part of our Christmas festivities. They had a regularly organized priesthood, dwelt in forests, met in sacred groves, and offered up human sacrifices to win the favor of the gods. The priests held all the traditions, administered the laws, and prescribed the customs. Naturally, they were held in great fear by the people, for when the priests were offended they sometimes roasted those whom they disliked, in large wicker cages. This horrible religion seems to have been brought from Gaul in the earliest times, and was woven in with the worship of the serpent, of the sun and moon, and some of the heathen gods and goddesses. The priests kept most of their faith and its ceremonies secret; but they certainly believed in a life beyond the grave. They built temples and altars, open to the sky. Many remains of these may still be seen. The most striking is Stonehenge, on Salisbury plain in Wiltshire.

In A.D. 61 Suetonius Paulinus, the Roman governor of Britain, seeing there could be no real peace so long as the Druids were allowed to make their fanatical appeals to the people, set out to extirpate them. The island of Anglesey, off the coast of Wales, was their sacred refuge, and against that he marched. At sight of the priests wildly calling down curses, and the women with streaming hair and flaming torches rushing to and fro, the soldiers paused in superstitious fear, but at the stern command of their leader they rushed forward, cut down the Britons, demolished the stone altars, flung the frantic Druids into their own divine fires, and hewed away the sacred groves.

The Roman yoke, however, was not yet firmly fitted to the necks of the Britons. While Suetonius was in Anglesey, a vicious uprising broke out in the east. The leader was Boadicea, widow of a king of the Icenians, who was driven to irrestrainable rage by the brutality with which she and her two daughters were treated. Her flaming appeals drew the surrounding tribes to her, and she led them into battle. The Druids by their doubtful prophecies



had encouraged her to hope for success. Legend represents them as foreseeing the greatness of England, and promising the frenzied queen—

“Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway ;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they.”

At first it seemed as if the furious and fanatic Britons would sweep the Romans into the sea. London, St. Albans, and other towns were given to the torch, and the inhabitants slain without mercy, but when Suetonius hurried back he stamped out the revolt in one great battle. Eighty thousand Britons are said to have fallen, and Boadicea poisoned herself in despair.

The real conqueror of Britain was Cnæus Julius Agricola, who was governor from A.D. 78 to 84. He was an excellent ruler, who built a line of forts from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Clyde, to keep back the turbulent North Britons. Then sailing round the north of the island, he discovered the Orkneys. He stopped the merciless tyranny of the Roman tax gatherers, and encouraged the natives to build comfortable dwellings, good roads, and thriving towns. The pleasing character of the country caused many Romans to settle there, and their power may be considered as having been established by this wise and good governor.

The Emperor Hadrian visited Britain in A.D. 120, and not feeling strong enough to hold all the lands gained by Agricola, he constructed an immense earthwork from the Tyne to the Solway Firth. In 139 the Emperor Antoninus Pius built a new dyke, which followed the line of that of Agricola. The restless North Britons continued troublesome, and the Emperor Severus made a campaign against them between 207 and 210, and erected a chain of forts along the line of the dyke built by Hadrian.

Historians have not been able to fix the time when Christianity was introduced into Britain. It is generally believed that the first church was built at Glastonbury, the structure being of the most primitive character. The new religion at that time was held in scorn by the Romans, but its steady growth caused them fear. Finally in the closing years of the third century, the Emperor Diocletian determined to stamp out the hated faith. You know of the dreadful persecution he set on foot in every part of the Roman Empire. St. Alban was the first in Britain to suffer death, and on the spot where in 304 he gave up his life for his religion the abbey of St. Albans was erected five centuries later.

The impact of Roman civilization made a lasting impression on the people and the country. The Romans built some fifty towns, many protected by walls,

and of these London soon became the chief, though York was made the civil and military capital of the country. You can still see some of the towers that flanked the ancient walls of the latter city. The most notable incident in the history of York was the proclamation of Constantine as Emperor in 306. Through him Christianity became the established religion of the empire, though his friendship for the growing faith was that of a statesman rather than of a devout believer.

The changing forms of government finally resulted in Britain being separated into five provinces, all traversed by admirable, paved roads, which centred in London and were connected across the Straits of Dover with other masterpieces of engineering skill in France, Spain, and Italy, ending at the Roman capital—for, as you know, in those days they used to say, "all roads lead to Rome."

Rome ruled Britain for three centuries and a half, but by that time the stupendous empire was crumbling to ruin. Her legions were called back to the capital and the condition of Britain became the extreme of feebleness. The people were in a state of hopeless collapse, with not a particle of their former vigor and resolution remaining. On the north the Picts, on the northwest the Scots, and on the south and east the Teutons were hammering the miserable beings, who meekly bowed their heads to the blows and quarrelled among themselves over theological questions, while their enemies swarmed over the border and swept them out of their path like so much chaff.

The foes who came by sea were Teutonic tribes from the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser in North Germany. Most of the country was conquered by these Teutons, of whom the principal tribes were the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who finally fused into one people, under the name of Anglo-Saxons, or *Angles* or *English*, while that portion of Britain in which they made their home was called *England*. They were cruel, and such of the conquered Britons as they did not enslave, they huddled into the western part of the island.

The first of these Teutonic kingdoms was founded in Kent. A despairing British chieftain or king, Vortigern, undertook the dangerous experiment of fighting fire with fire. To save his people from their northern foes, the Scots, he invited the Teutons to come to his aid. Two well-known Jutish vikings, Hengist and Horsa, accepted the invitation with their followers, and in the year 449 landed on the island of Thanet, the southeastern extremity of England.

At first Hengist and Horsa served their host well, driving back the wild northern tribes. Soon, however, larger ambitions took possession of the shrewd sea-kings. They recognized their own strength and the Britons' weak-

ness; they sent word to other Jutes to join them and soon accumulated a formidable force; then they picked a quarrel with those they had come to aid.

Legend represents King Vortigern as cowardly, weak, and evil, and tells that he was fascinated by the wiles of Rowena, a daughter of Hengist. At any rate he made little resistance to the bold robbers, and the real defence of the Britons fell to his son Vortimer. There were many fierce combats, in one of which Horsa was slain. The valiant Vortimer also perished, and gradually the Jutes crushed out all resistance.

Finally, King Vortigern proposed a friendly meeting. Hengist, now sole leader of the Jutes, consented. In the midst of a great love-feast held at Stonehenge, the treacherous Hengist cried out suddenly to his men, "Use your swords!"

At the signal every Jute stabbed his British neighbor to the heart. Vortigern alone was spared; for he had wedded Rowena, and probably the murderers thought him more useful alive than dead.

These are only dark and doubtful stories. They may or may not be the literal facts connected with the first entrance of the great Teutonic race into England. Hengist, Horsa, and Vortigern, however, really existed, and Eric, a son of Hengist, was, in 457, formally crowned King of Kent, that is, of England's southeastern coast. He was the first of her Teutonic kings.

Other Teutonic tribes were naturally drawn to Britain by the Jutes' success. The Saxons, under a chieftain named Ella, founded a kingdom of Sussex (the South-Saxons) in 477. Two Saxon chiefs, coming over in 495, conquered the portion of the country now known as Hampshire, and named it Wessex, or the Kingdom of the West Saxons. Then, again, from Jutland came a swarm of Angles, who occupied all that remained of Eastern Britain. Increasing in strength and numbers, they became masters of most of the country, and gave their own name of *Angles* or *English* to all the invaders.

According to tradition, the famous King Arthur administered the first real repulse to the Saxons in 520, at Badbury, in Dorsetshire. Arthur has often been looked upon as a mythical hero, but careful researches leave no doubt that he was a valiant patriot, who struck many stout blows at the invaders of his country. By and by, however, the Saxons pushed inland and their power grew. The Kingdom of the Northumbrians was founded in 547, and consisted of the land from the Humber to the Firth of Forth; the Kingdom of the Mercians embraced the midland country, while Kent was the Kingdom of the Jutes, and Sussex that of the South Saxons. Essex the Kingdom of the East Saxons and that of the East Angles, divided into Norfolk and Suffolk (North-folk and South-folk), were less important. These seven leading kingdoms are often referred to as the Heptarchy, though they were forever at strife with one



another. Their warring indeed was so incessant that it is not worth further reference.

The determination of Pope Gregory the Great, in 597, to reconvert this Teutonic Britain recalls a pretty story of that remarkable man. One day, in the streets of Rome, his attention was attracted to a number of blue-eyed and fair-haired children, brought as slaves from their distant home in Angle-land. Impressed by their beauty and intelligence, he stopped and made inquiries regarding them. When he had learned the whole truth, he remarked: "They should not be called Angles, but rather Angels." His soul was so stirred that he made plans to go among the Britons as a missionary; but his pressing duties in Rome would not permit him to leave, and he sent Saint Augustine to Britain, accompanied by forty monks. A way had been opened for these evangelists by the marriage of Ethelbert, King of Kent, to a French princess, who had become a convert in her own country to Christianity. She persuaded her husband to receive Augustine, and he not only won over the King himself but thousands of his subjects, who were strongly influenced by the example of their ruler.

The religion of the early English was like that of other Teutonic tribes, being a form of heathenism, in which *Woden*, who was the *Odin* of the Danes, was worshipped as the leading god, who gave victory. Next to him was *Thor*, or *Thunder*, who ruled the sky. There were other less important gods. Our Wednesday is Woden's Day and Thursday is Thor's Day, the names having been preserved to the present time.

Augustine was so successful that he established the first cathedral of Canterbury, of which he became archbishop and which is still the mother church of England. He founded also the first monastery where missionaries were trained to carry forward the great work that had been begun.

The Irish monks, however, had done proselyting in the north of England at an earlier date than that of Augustine. From the Irish monasteries in Ireland and Scotland tramped the zealous though impoverished laborers in their Master's vineyard, to reap the harvest that was awaiting them. One of their colonies was planted in Lindisfarne in Durham, and from it Cuthbert traversed Northumbria in the seventh century, and brought the kingdom into the fold of Christianity, while his co-laborers were successful in other sections. The monasteries grew in number and were educational as well as industrial in their scope.

The Church, as might have been expected, arrayed itself on the side of the feeble and downtrodden, who to their grateful relief were given one day out of every seven on which they could rest from their grinding labor. Naturally, perhaps, the Church gained not only great social influence, but was a

force in politics. A synod held at Whitby in 664 was attended by delegates from all parts of the country, with the Archbishop of Canterbury at their head. This council decided that the Roman custom should be followed in the observance of Easter and thus all the churches were brought into unity. It is a curious fact that the delegates came from tribes, who at that very time were fiercely fighting one another. The concord of the council was a sign to the world of the real spiritual unity that underlay these quarrels, and yet what a grim commentary the whole business was upon the mockery of the professions of these men!

The kingdom of Wessex now enjoyed a century and a half of prosperity. Egbert, a descendant of Cerdic the first king, claimed the throne in 787, but was overthrown by a rival, and saved his life by fleeing the country. He found refuge in the court of Charlemagne, who was dreaming of riviving the old Roman Empire. Shortly after Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West, the King of Wessex died, and Egbert was called home to succeed him. He showed the influence of Charlemagne upon his character, by resolutely setting out to bring all the neighboring petty tribes into subjection to his sovereignty. His army, "lean, pale, and long-bearded," was a resistless engine, which steadily crushed all opposition, so that in 828 the great task was accomplished and Egbert had fairly won the right to assume the title of "King of the English." Cæsar, as you will remember, had called the land *Britain*; the Celts had termed it *Albion*, and it now took the name of *Angle-land*, or *England*.

During those tempestuous times, the annals make frequent mention of the Scandinavians or Northmen, whose name was afterward softened in France to Norman. They were of the Teutonic race, and built up the kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. They were massive, fearless navigators, neither more nor less than freebooters and pirates, who terrorized all of Europe that could be reached by their swift galleys. Some of the latter, as you know, ploughed across the Atlantic and saw the American continent, hundreds of years before Christopher Columbus was born.

England was made to feel the whip of scorpions wielded by these merciless Northmen or Danes. The invaders were still heathen and they revelled in the destruction of the Christian churches and monasteries and in the slaying of the priests. Creeping along the coast, hiding in woods and caves, or sailing unexpectedly up the rivers in their galleys and then stealing horses, the Danes galloped through the country on their ferocious forays, sparing nothing they could reach.

The Scots of Ireland had been converted to Christianity in the fifth century mainly through the labors of the great missionary St. Patrick, and his work.

was carried on with marvellous completeness by his followers. Learning, therefore, flourished in Ireland, and students flocked thither from England, Germany, and Gaul. The land was luminous with churches and monasteries, but these were blotted out by the Danes, who drove the native Irish back into the swamps and bogs, and then made their own homes along the sea-coast.

Such was the miserable condition of England and its immediate neighbors, when one of the greatest characters in English history appeared on the scene, and through his life and achievements accomplished a work for his country whose grandeur and importance have never been surpassed. This heroic figure, whose millenary was celebrated with imposing ceremonies in 1901, was **ALFRED THE GREAT**. It is fitting that so illustrious a personage should receive special attention in these pages.



SAINT AUGUSTINE PREACHING TO ETHELBERT

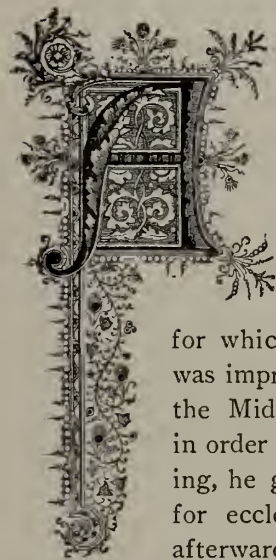




ALFRED WINS HIS MOTHER'S BOOK

## Chapter CII

### ALFRED THE GREAT



ALFRED was the fifth son of Æthelwulf, King of Wessex, and of Osburh, his first wife, and was born at Wantage in Berkshire in 849. The father, it is said, had been Bishop of Winchester until necessity made him king. He fought the invading Northmen while under-king of Kent, and afterward succeeded his father Egbert on the throne.

Æthelwulf, however, had a side to his character for which the Witan or "wise men" felt little sympathy. He was impressed by the spell which the name of Rome exercised in the Middle Ages, and disregarded many claims of his kingdom in order to make a pilgrimage to the Eternal City. Before leaving, he granted a tenth part of the rents from his private domain for ecclesiastical and charitable purposes, and this grant was afterward mistakenly represented as a gift of the tenth of the entire revenue of the kingdom, and as the legal origin of tithes.

Little is known of the mother of Alfred, who was the daughter of the King's cupbearer, and came of the royal house of the Jutes, settled in the Isle of Wight. The following incident as recorded by a chronicler of the time throws light on the introduction of Alfred to book-learning: "On a certain day [he was then twelve years old, and had thus far remained illiterate] his mother was showing him and his brothers a beautiful book of songs, with rich pictures and fine painted initial letters, and she said to them: 'Whichever of you shall first learn this book shall have it for his own.' Then Alfred, moved by these

words, or rather by a divine inspiration, and allured by the illuminated letters, spoke before his brothers, who, though his seniors in years, were not so in grace, and answered: 'Will you really give that book to the one of us who can first understand and repeat it to you?' Upon which his mother smiled and repeated what she had said. So Alfred took the book from her hand and went to his master to get it read, and, in due time, brought it again to his mother and recited it; so it became his own."

Alfred's visit to Rome is supposed to have lasted about two years, and with this visit no doubt should be associated the main part of his formal education. He probably acquired a fair knowledge of Latin, and thus gained the key to the learning accessible at the time. There, too, he must have imbibed that fondness for literature which led him to translate what he looked upon as the classics in science, literature, and religion. On his way home, he remained for some months with his father at the Court of Charles the Bald, King of the Western Franks, and there he tasted of the best phases of mediæval monarchy.

When Æthelwulf and his son left the court of Charles the Bald, the father was past sixty years of age, and took with him as his bride Judith, the daughter of Charles, a maiden not more than twelve. His people refused to receive him, for the leaders of Wessex had sworn an oath to bestow the crown upon his son Æthelbald. The father complacently accepted the situation and withdrew to Kent, where he ruled as under-king for two years. His death was followed by the scandalous marriage of his widow to Æthelbald, but to neither did she bear any children, and her second husband passed away in 860.

At this point an interesting fact must be noted. Returning to her father, Judith eloped with Baldwin I., of Flanders, and from the couple descended the Matilda, daughter of Baldwin V. of Flanders, who became the wife of William the Conqueror. Alfred's daughter married Judith's son, and thus was framed the link which binds King Edward VII. to his illustrious predecessor of more than a thousand years ago.

Æthelwulf set up for the first time in English history the claim to bequeath the crown as he chose. He willed that at his death it should pass to Æthelstan, his eldest son, then to Æthelbald, to Æthelred, and thence to Alfred, the children of each being excluded. Æthelbert, standing in order of age between Æthelbald and Æthelred, was to remain after his father's death under-king of Kent.

While this arrangement suited the persons chiefly concerned, it by no means suited the Witan, who, seeing the need of a united kingdom as a protection against the Danes, set the will aside, and decided to take their kings in order from the royal family. A condition as unparalleled as it was fortunate was that there was not a spark of jealousy among the brothers. Whoever was

king was certain to receive the loyal support of the others. When Æthelbald died in 860, Æthelbert was called from Kent, and his rule extended over both that province and Wessex. Six years later, Æthelred, his brother, succeeded. Alfred was at that time seventeen years old, and was emphatically the right-hand man of the king, serving as his chief of staff in war, as chief minister in peace, and signing all royal warrants next to the king,—and all this without a taint of envy or lukewarmness. Fortunate indeed it was that such was the case, for a momentous crisis in the history of England was at hand. During the first three years of Æthelred's reign, the Danes swarmed over Northumbria and East Anglia, and were preparing to overrun Mercia and Wessex.

The first encounter of Alfred with the Danes took place in 868, before he was yet king, and when he was in his twentieth year. About the same time he was married to the daughter of Ethelred Mucil, Earl of the Gainas, the people whose name still appears in that of the town of Gainsborough.

At Alfred's wedding he was seized with a distressing affliction which was beyond the skill of the best physicians of the time. Most probably the ailment was epilepsy, so that through the most trying years of his trying life, when engaged upon his grand work, he was liable at any moment to be taken with an epileptic fit. The affliction cannot fail to stir our sympathy and deepen our admiration of the wonderful man.

In this same year of 868, the Danes withdrew from Northumberland and invaded Mercia, whose people in their panic appealed to Wessex for help. Æthelred and Alfred lost no time in responding, but the campaign brought nothing conclusive. The Danes clung to the fortified town of Nottingham, but accepted a bribe to let Mercia alone for the time, while they pushed into East Anglia, which was conquered in 870. A year later, the Danes, uniting with some Norwegian Vikings or "Sea Kings," sailed up the Thames and besieged Reading. The royal brothers led the brave men of Wessex to the defence of the place, but, though successful at first, were decisively overcome in a great battle. Before long, however, the Danes were disastrously defeated to the westward. They rallied and advanced against Winchester, the capital of Wessex. They were successful at Basing, but met such determined resistance that they advanced no farther into Hampshire. In the next battle Æthelred was mortally wounded, and, the West Saxon forces withdrawing, the Danes remained masters of the field.

A few weeks after the accession of Alfred, he encountered the Danes again. He surprised them at first, but in the end was repulsed. The enemy, however, had never faced such sturdy resistance, nor suffered such severe losses. Indeed, they were as tired of the fighting as were the English, and it did not take long to agree upon terms of peace. Alfred had to pay a heavy price, for



he was obliged to debase the coinage, and to lay so grievous a tax upon landowners that many of them surrendered their lands to the King in preference to paying the tax. The Danes withdrew from Reading and turned their attention to London, which at that time was looked upon as belonging to Mercia rather than to Wessex. The three years' respite that followed was enjoyed by Wessex only, and London remained in the hands of the Danes until finally reconquered by Alfred.

The Danes divided Mercia among them in 877. The culmination of Danish influence in Midland England was in the five Danish boroughs, Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Lincoln, and Stamford, which appear to have formed some sort of a confederation. In the Norse settlement of Northumbria, Halfdene, a Norwegian king, son of Lodroc, drove out the Picts and Strathclyde Britons, who were becoming aggressive on the Northumbrian borders. Perhaps it was fear of these people that prevented his settling in Bernicia, the country now known as the Eastern Lowlands of Scotland, but in southern Northumbria Halfdene divided the lands among his followers, and all the province of Deira became Scandinavian.

Alfred saw that his little kingdom could be saved only by sea, and that the relentless invaders of his country must be defeated upon the water or not at all. He must be able to watch their coming, so as to give warning, and must intercept their supplies and cut off their retreat. So it came about that, during the three years' breathing spell, he called into existence the first English navy.

Where he obtained the vessels is not known, for the evidence points to the last of his reign as the beginning of shipbuilding in England. He may have hired the ships from the Northmen or from the Frisians, whom he employed later. Be that as it may, he was able to stop a Danish fleet heading for the Thames, and to send it scurrying away. Stealing along the coast, the enemy found a landing-place at Wareham in Dorsetshire. The alert Alfred immediately set to work to blockade them, and the frightened Danes were glad to make a treaty by which they promised "speedily to depart his kingdom." But they found pretexts for breaking their pledge, and, seizing Exeter, held it throughout the winter of 876-877. In the following spring, a Danish fleet of more than a hundred vessels sailed round the coast with the intention of reinforcing their countrymen blockaded in Exeter. But at Swanade a severe tempest dashed all the ships upon the rocks. This wrested the control of the Channel from the invaders, and the garrison at Exeter were helpless before Alfred. The Danes saw they were defeated, and surrendered on the promise of being permitted to leave Wessex. They passed into Mercia and divided some of the choicest lands in Gloucestershire and Warwickshire among themselves.

According to the rules of warfare of those days, this was the end for a time:

of all campaigning. Not doubting it, the West Saxon army was disbanded, and the men returned to their farms, believing no more fighting would be required, at least before the return of fair weather. But, without warning, the Danes swarmed over the Mercian border and surprised Wessex. They came like an inundation of the sea, spreading everywhere. In no place was there the slightest preparation for their coming. If ever the term "unpreparedness" was justified, it was as applied to the West Saxons, many of whom, looking upon further resistance as hopeless, fled. In the quaint words of the chronicler, "Mickle of the folk over the sea they drove, and of the others the most deal they rode over; all but King Alfred; he with a little band hardly fared after the woods and in the moor-fastnesses." A few brave followers in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Somerset still clung to Alfred, but for a long time it looked as if all the rest of Wessex was to pass unresisting into the possession of the Danes.

It is hard to conceive of a monarch driven to sorer straits than King Alfred, during those gloomy days. Followed by his still faithful band, he plunged into the swamps and forests of Somersetshire, so hidden in the tangled depths, with which his men were familiar, that his enemies could not trace him to his hiding-place. The story is told that he spent some days in the hut of a neat-herd, who knew his identity, but, at Alfred's request, kept the secret from his wife. One day when Alfred was mending his bow and arrows, the wife set some cakes to bake at the fire, and bade their guest watch and turn them while she went out for a brief time. When she came back, Alfred was still busy with his weapons and doubtless pondering upon weighty matters, while the cakes were burnt to a crisp. The angry housewife soundly scolded him, saying that one who was so ready to eat other people's food, ought to show enough appreciation to do the little work she had asked of him.

Between the opening of the year and Easter, 878, Alfred threaded his way to a piece of firm ground in the middle of the marshes, formed by the Parret and the Tone. The position was very strong naturally, and he made his headquarters at Athelney, whence he began a guerrilla warfare through which he inflicted considerable damage on the enemy. Whether the story be true or not, it is related that, in order to learn the intentions of the Danes, Alfred visited their camp in the guise of a minstrel or juggler, and stayed a full week, entertaining them and their king, Guthrum, with his music. When he had learned all he wished to know, he quietly departed, without having once drawn suspicion to himself.

Before long Alfred's followers had so increased that he did not shrink from facing his enemies in the open field. The two forces met at Eddington, near Westbury, and the Danes suffered defeat. After two weeks' siege, Guthrum

surrendered on terms that were an immense triumph to the West Saxons. The invaders agreed to give Alfred as many hostages as he demanded, receiving none in return; they were to quit Wessex forever, and Guthrum announced himself prepared to turn Christian and be baptized. In the treaty afterward concluded at Wedmore, the boundaries between Danish and English Britain were defined. The rights of Alfred were established over all of Wessex, Kent, and London, and a large district extending into Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

It was not until 886, however, that the little Saxon chiefs all over England, recognizing Alfred's ability and power, came to him voluntarily, and, placing their hands in his, acknowledged him as their lord. In the same year Alfred was able to begin rebuilding London. He reconstructed the Roman walls with material provided by the church of St. Alban. He rebuilt the bridge spanning the Thames, and, to provide means for defending the structure, raised a tower, on whose site William the Conqueror afterward built the Tower of London. Being secure now in the possession of the town, the English had no trouble in holding the Thames, and that protected Kent, Wessex, and Mercia.

A tremendous test of Alfred's material work for England came in 893-896, when Hasting, the Northman, landed an army in Britain. The Danes already settled in East England formed an open alliance with Hasting, but the formidable force, after several defeats at the hands of Alfred, finally broke to fragments, and in 897 the grave danger to Wessex vanished, for the time. The last days of the illustrious Alfred closed in peace and tranquillity, the entry in the English Chronicle being as follows:

"This year (901) died Alfred, son of Æthelwulf, six days before the Mass of All Saints. He was king over the whole English nation, except that part which was under the dominion of the Danes. He held the kingdom one year and a half less than thirty years. And then Edward, his son, succeeded to the kingdom." \*

Alfred's services to England were those of a patriot and statesman as well as warrior. The code of laws which he compiled in 890 was prefaced by the Ten Commandments, and closed with the Golden Rule, and he remarked, referring to the former: "He who keeps them shall not need any other law book." He first made a collection of the Kentish and West Saxon and Mercian statutes, which amended those that had descended unwritten. The laws of Kent included the *Dooms of Æthelbert*, the additions of his successors, those of Ine of Wessex (a predecessor of Alfred), and the judgments of Offa, the great Mercian king. Alfred added to these a number of his own laws, which

\* The length of Alfred's reign, however, is incorrectly stated, since it lacked only a few weeks of thirty years.



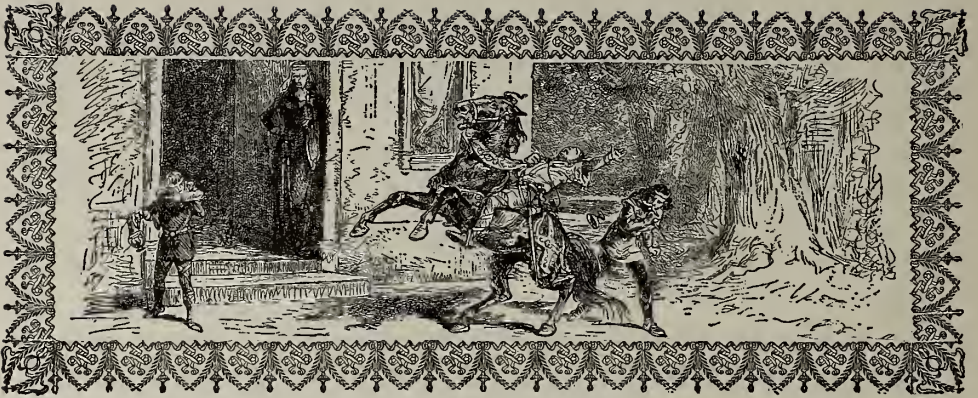
were decreed to be in force in all three kingdoms,—Kent, Wessex, and English Mercia. His laws formed the groundwork of the judicial system of the Welsh, the West Saxons, and the Mercians.

But it is said that the real services of Alfred the Great to his people lay less in the framing and codifying of the laws, than in the enforcing of them. He made it clear to his people that the supreme power of the ruler was buttressed by the judicial system, and the executive authority would be used to the utmost to enforce obedience. The effect was immeasurable for good.

Not only did this extraordinary man rebuild London, but his constructive genius was stamped all through Wessex. A considerable part of the royal revenue was paid to the workmen whom he brought from other nations, for, wherever he could command ability, he cheerfully paid the price. You may see to-day in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford an illustration of his goldsmith's skill in the specimen known as "King Alfred's Jewel," which is a polished crystal of an oval form, a little more than two inches in length, and half an inch in thickness, inlaid with a green and yellow mosaic enamel. It may have been a part of the King's sceptre. The quaint inscription means,—  
"Alfred ordered me to be made."

The British Museum contains 452 coins issued under Alfred, his money having been coined at Bath, Canterbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Winchester, London, and Oxford. The artistic work upon these coins is inferior to that shown in earlier as well as later pieces. The work, however, of the illuminators and writers of manuscripts was excellent. There is preserved a manuscript produced by the monks of Alfred's monastery at Winchester, as well as a volume of Gospels written at Canterbury, which are not excelled by anything done in Europe at that period.

Centuries were yet to come and go before printing would be thought of, and a written volume was worth a moderate fortune. Alfred caused a number of books to be copied and distributed for the instruction of his people. Among these was his translation of the *Universal History* of Orosius, which was written near the opening of the fifth century. Others were the translation of Bede's "*Ecclesiastical History of the English*," "*The Pastoral Care*" of Gregory the Great, and another book by him called the "*Dialogues*." Several volumes have been named as bearing the stamp of the King's mind, but investigation throws doubt upon the claim. It is more than probable, however, that the "*List of Martyrs*" was composed during his time, and also the work known as the "*Blooms or Blossoms of King Alfred*," which is an adaptation of St. Augustine's "*Soliloquies*," and of his *Epistles to Paulina* in the "*Vision of God*," together with extracts from his "*City of God*," and from Gregory and Jerome.



THE DEATH OF EDWARD THE MARTYR

## Chapter CIII

### THE LATER SAXONS.



ON the death of Alfred his followers raised on a shield, as their king, his eldest son Edward, surnamed The Elder, an able and ambitious soldier. He became King of all the English, the ruler of that people to the Humber, and lord of all Britain. The most important event of his reign was the effect produced upon England by the marauding leader of the Northmen, known by various names, and of whom you have learned in the history of France as Rollo the Ganger. Charles the Simple, King of the West Franks, bought peace of Rollo by a large bribe, in the form of an extensive tract of land at the mouth of the Seine. Then the pirate turned Christian and became a fairly good ruler, with the title of Duke of the Normans, as the name became in French, while the territory which he obtained was known as Normandy.

Edward passed away in 925, and his eldest son Æthelstan reigned until 940. Three years before his death, he and his brother Edmund gained a crushing victory over a Danish king from Ireland and the Scots, Danes, and Welsh of the north, so that in the end there was only one king in all England. His son, Edward the Magnificent, after reigning brilliantly for six years, was stabbed to death by a banished outlaw, who had forced himself to the royal board, and fought viciously when the King and others attempted to eject him. Since the sons of Edmund were still quite young, his brother Edred, who had a sickly body but a strong mind, was chosen king. The wisest act of Edred was to

take as his adviser Dunstan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of remarkable ability, who gave all his energy to carrying forward true reform.

When Dunstan was a boy he lived near the village of Glastonbury, where his father, who was a rich man, had a large number of serfs to till the land. The monks in the neighborhood were attracted by the bright wit of the lad, and took pains in instructing him. He became so learned that his fame reached the King, who called him to his court. But when the courtiers saw how superior Dunstan was to them, they were jealous and treated him so roughly that he angrily went home. He had been pulled from his horse and flung into a pond, the effects of which threw him into a brain fever. When he recovered, he became a monk. He was not only profoundly learned for the time, but he could sing well and play the harp; besides which he painted beautiful pictures, and was a cunning worker in metals. He was so kind and sympathetic that all loved him deeply, though many looked upon him with such awe that they believed he had power over evil spirits, and in an encounter with the devil had put him to flight. You will not forget that in those far-away days, and indeed for a long time after, the people were superstitious to an absurd degree.

Dunstan however, was as much human as you and I. One of his failings was a quick temper, which often got him into trouble even after he became Archbishop of Canterbury and chief adviser of the King, who more than once was obliged to send him away. But Dunstan was so able and honest that it was not long before he was brought back again.

Now at that time there were two classes of clergy in England,—the regular and the secular. The regulars, or monks, lived in the monasteries, apart from the world, and were forbidden to marry, while the seculars lived in the world and were allowed to marry. The discipline among the regulars had become very lax. Many of them were married and some were lazy and wicked. Dunstan insisted that none of the clergy, whether secular or regular, should marry. He impressed upon them the necessity of leading better lives, and laboring for the good of their fellow-men. He taught them to study painting and music, hushed the quarrels between the English and the Danes, and altogether did a blessed work for his country and for his fellow-men. He was virtually sovereign during the reign of the licentious Edgar (959—975), and it was his wise policy which procured for Edgar the title of the *Pacific*.

A good deal of disorder followed the death of Edgar in 975, and there was a bitter quarrel as to which of the King's sons should succeed him,—Edward, about twelve years old, or Æthelred, who was six years younger. The elder was finally fixed upon, and Elfrida, the mother of the younger, was mortally incensed, for she had set her heart upon obtaining the crown for Æthelred. She



had, however, no choice but to submit, and she did so with the best grace she could.

Dunstan was still the real king, and it was he who placed the crown upon young Edward's head. The dark stepmother, standing by, vowed a vengeance which was not long delayed. While King Edward was hunting one day, in Dorsetshire, he spurred ahead of his attendants and reached Corfe Castle, where his stepmother lived. The young king blew his hunting-horn, and Elfrida hurried out beaming with smiles: "Dear King, you are welcome," she said, "pray dismount and come in!" I am afraid, my dear madam," he replied, "that my company will miss me and think I have come to some harm. I will be glad to drink a cup of wine here in the saddle to you and my little brother."

Elfrida hurried into the castle to get the wine, and reappeared in a few minutes bearing it in her hand. The King reached down, smilingly took the cup, and lifting it to his lips, said, "Health to you both," including in the wish little Æthelred, whose hand was clasped in that of his mother. At that moment, an armed attendant of the Queen, who had stolen around unnoticed to the rear of the King, leaped forward and buried a dagger in his back. The King dropped the cup, and his startled horse dashed off. Weakened from the loss of blood, the dying King soon toppled from the saddle, but his foot caught in the stirrup, and he was cruelly dragged over the stones, until his friends came up with the exhausted animal and released the body. The man who had slain the King had been ordered to do so by Elfrida, when she re-entered the castle to bring out the cup of wine. Because of the manner of his death, Edward is called the Martyr. His great adviser Dunstan retired to Canterbury and devoted himself solely to religious duties until his death in 988.

Æthelred succeeded his murdered brother on the throne. He was surnamed *The Unready*, and was a worthless creature who gave himself up to all manner of vicious pleasures. When the Danes began again their invasions of the country, the cowardly Æthelred and his friends resorted to the disgraceful practice of buying them off. This pleased the robbers, who took the money and then came again, sure of receiving each time a big bribe from the terrified and cringing English. The heavy taxes which it was necessary to impose were called Danegeld, or Dane-money. Of course this could not go on forever, and when the end of his resources was reached, the worthless Æthelred took refuge with Duke Richard the Good, of Normandy, whose sister he had married.

Finally in 1013, Sweyn, the Dane, conquered all England. He died the following year, and then Æthelred was recalled, but he too soon died, and the war went on between his son Edmund, surnamed Ironsides, and Canute, son of Sweyn. Thus there were two kings in the country. Edmund put up a brave

fight, but in the end agreed to accept Wessex, East Anglia, Essex, and London for his share, while the Dane took all the rest. Edmund, however, had reigned only seven months (April 23–November 30, 1016), when he died, and Canute or Cnut became the first fully acknowledged Danish king of England, his rule lasting from 1017 to 1035.

Canute began his reign with great harshness, banishing or putting to death the leading Englishmen who had fought against him; but this severity did not last. He soon sought the good-will of the people. Perhaps you have read how he rebuked the courtiers who, in flattering his greatness, declared that even the sea would obey him. He had them place his chair on the edge of the waves and commanded the rising tide to come no nearer. When it steadily rose despite his order, he said some sensible things to the silly flatterers.

Canute's plan was to form a mighty empire which included Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and England. He divided England into four districts or earldoms,—Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria, each ruled by an earl, with absolute authority. The plan began well, but mutual jealousy brought friction, until the safety of the country was imperilled.

Canute visited his different possessions, but dwelt most in England, of which he became very fond. He seems to have been a worthy Christian, for he showed a reverence for all that was good, and one day wrote to his subjects: "I have vowed to God to live a right life in all things, to rule justly and piously over my realm, and to administer just judgment to all."

When Canute died England was divided between his two sons Harold and Hardicanute. By this time, however, the people had become tired of their Danish rulers. The Great Council of the Witan sent for Edward, the son of Æthelred, whom they wished to have as their king. He had been taken to the French or Norman court when only nine years old, and had spent nearly thirty years there, so that in feeling and sentiment he was a Norman. He took with him to England a number of French favorites, filled the churches with French priests, and in short ruled like the Frenchman he really was. He even went so far as to give his pledge to Duke William of Normandy, that on his death he would leave the English crown to the Norman duke. The latter, as you will presently learn, never forgot this promise, though Edward chose to disregard it.

Edward married the daughter of Godwin, Earl of Wessex, who was the real ruler of the country until his death in 1053, when he was succeeded by his son Harold as earl. The nominal King gave his thoughts to church affairs, and spent a long time in building an abbey at the west end of London, which was called Westminster. A part of the building may still be seen in the basement of the present magnificent abbey. His life was so blameless that he gained the name of Edward the Confessor, or the Christian. Hardly had

Edward completed and dedicated his Abbey, when he died and was buried there. On his death-bed, Edward, despite his solemn promise to the Duke of Normandy, and in view of the fact that he had no children, recommended Harold, Earl of Wessex, as his successor. His advice was followed. The Witan, or National Council, selected Harold as king, and he was crowned January 16, 1066.

Before taking up the important events that now quickly followed, it will be instructive to study the social conditions of England during that period, and the years that preceded it. The government rested in an elective sovereign, who was aided by the council of the Witan, or Wise Men. All freemen had the right to attend this council, but the power really rested in a few of the nobles and clergy. The body could elect the king, but were required to limit their choice to the royal family. If he proved unfit, the Witan had the power to depose him. That body confirmed grants of public lands, and was a supreme court of justice in civil and criminal cases. In conjunction with the king, the Witan enacted laws, levied taxes, and appointed the chief officers and bishops of the realm.

The freemen were compelled to help in the maintenance of roads, bridges, and forts, and were obliged to serve in case of war. Besides the earls, who were nobles by birth, there was a class called *thanes*, or servants, or companions of the king, who after a time outranked the hereditary nobility. Both classes were rewarded by the king for faithful services, or for valorous deeds, and this reward was generally in the form of land, since the king owned no end of that. The condition attached to such a gift was the obligation of the receiver to provide a certain number of equipped soldiers to fight for the donor. The nobles and large landholders, imitating the king, gave certain parts of their estates in the same way to tenants, and they in turn, if they chose, could do the same to those below them. This constituted the *Feudal System*, by which every freeman below the rank of a noble was obliged to attach himself to some superior whom he was bound to serve, and who in return became his legal protector. It grew to be the common practice of the small landholders, particularly during the Danish invasion, to claim the protection of some neighboring lord, who was thus placed at the head of a strong force of armed followers. The freeman gave up his land, but got it back on favorable conditions. It must be remembered, however, that the feudal system was incomplete in England until after the Norman conquest, when it was firmly fixed.

A system of guilds grew up with the cities and towns. They were associations for mutual benefit such as are common in these times. The peace-guilds furnished a voluntary police force for preserving order and punishing criminals. A contribution from each member served as a partial insurance for



losses by fire, and they carefully looked after the protection against thieves, and the good behavior of their own members. At a later period the merchant-guilds were organized, and acquired great wealth and prominence. There were also various social and religious guilds.

The kingdom was divided into townships, hundreds (so-called because each furnished a hundred soldiers or supported a hundred families), and counties or shires. The king's officer, called a shire-reeve or sheriff, gathered the taxes due the crown, and looked after the execution of the laws. The same system was followed in the hundreds and townships.

Since the nation had its assembly of wise men who constituted a high court, so each shire, hundred, and town had its court open to all freemen. In these, without special judge, and without any lawyers, the disputes were settled by a vote of the whole body. Two methods were followed. The accused might secure acquittal by compurgation, that is, purifying or freeing himself of guilt. He would swear he was not guilty, and then get a number of neighbors to swear they believed his oath. If this did not satisfy his judges, he could bring witnesses to swear to some special fact, but the value of a man's oath depended upon his rank, that of a noble being equal to the oaths of twelve common men.

Failing to clear himself by this means, the accused was compelled to submit to the "ordeal." This generally consisted of carrying a piece of hot iron a short distance, stepping over heated plough shares separated by brief intervals, or thrusting the bare arm to the elbow in boiling water. If the ordeal was passed without injury to the accused, he was declared innocent and no punishment followed. Since it cannot be supposed that the laws of nature were suspended for the benefit even of a guiltless person, this test in reality was worthless. The vindication of a person subjected to the ordeal was dependent wholly upon accident, or skill, or, what was quite as frequent, the connivance of those in charge of the test. Perhaps it would be correct to say that the jury was "fixed," for it amounted to that.

Most of the penalties inflicted in these courts consisted of fines, a pecuniary value being attached to each man's life, with that of a freeman about one-twelfth a nobleman's. A slave was not allowed to testify in court nor could he be punished by the court. When convicted of crime, his owner paid the fine, and then evened up matters by taking out the value with the lash from the back of the slave. While murder could be requited by a fine, treason was punishable with death.

By "common law" was meant the ancient customs, few of which had been reduced to writing, in distinction from the laws made since by legislative bodies. These customs form the basis of the present system of justice in America as well as in England.

It followed inevitably that the introduction of Christianity did vast good in lifting the fallen, elevating the oppressed, teaching the virtues of self-sacrifice and labor for one's fellow-men, in building monasteries, encouraging education and industry, and in holding out the surety of a reward in a future life for the good done in this life.

A peculiar practice that grew up in those times was that which gave the "right of sanctuary," as it was called. The churches were held in profound veneration, and it was decreed that any one fleeing thither for refuge could not be seized until forty days had expired, during which period he had the choice of leaving the kingdom and going into exile. While this right doubtless defeated many schemes of savage vengeance, it grew into a travesty upon justice, for scores of ruffians, robbers, and murderers took advantage of it to defy the law. Although modified a number of times, the right of sanctuary was not really abolished until 1624, when James I. was King of England.

I have shown in my account of the feudal system how the army was organized, although at first there was a national militia founded upon the obligation of all the freemen to fight for their country. The Saxons invariably fought on foot, their principal weapons being the spear, javelin, battle-axe, and sword. They wore helmets and a sort of flexible armor, composed of iron rings or thick leather covered with iron scales or small plates. There was nothing resembling a navy until the time of Alfred.

The language of the Saxons resembled the Low-German of the present day. The written characters were called *runes*, which means secrets or mysteries. On a drinking-horn found on the Danish-German frontier is cut the following, which scholars agree is fully 1,500 years old:

*Ek Hlewagastir. Holtinger. horna. tawido*

This reproduction in English characters means:

"I, Hlewagastir, son of Holta, made the horn."

Christianity brought the Latin alphabet, and the runic characters disappeared. Ranking with the first of the English books was the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," which is a history beginning with the Roman invasion under Cæsar, and closing in the year 1154. Among other early books were Cædmon's poem of the Creation, and Bede's history of Britain. Bede, or Beda, as he is sometimes called, was born at Durham, in 673, and thirty years later was ordained to the priesthood, having already obtained a wide reputation for learning and piety. He spent his life in the quiet retirement of the monastery at Yarrow, and devoted his time to studying and writing. His "Ecclesiastical History of England" was written in Latin and translated into English by Alfred the Great.





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